



Cops violated Dinky's rights, CHR execs say

By Norman Bordadora, Christine O. Arellano and Margaux C. Ordo

THE HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF FORMER SO- called "Dinky" soldiers were violated when they were arrested on Friday by Manila police for shooting on Pasay Boulevard while wearing a black T-shirt with the message "Patriotism is 100% NAU (Not Us!)" according to CHR execs.

small headshots/quepasa.com.ph

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Cebu women's group cited for domestic violence fight

By Tina Arnes-Danila

AS CEBU MEN WHO BEAT THEIR WIVES OR abuse their children as victims get more ink in the news, women's groups in the city are also being cited for their role in the fight against domestic violence.

Thanks to Liskap Pilipina Foundation Inc., recently cited as the collaborating institution in the

Attacks on leftists mount

Student activist killed; peasant leader hurt but wife, son slain

By Edgar Abajo and Gil Francis G. Aroneta
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Rosette Orjeda
PDI Central Luzon Desk

IN MOUNTING VIOLENCE against militants, unidentified men yesterday shot dead the wife and son of a peasant leader in Zamboales while gravely wounding him, hours after a student leader was gunned down by an assassin in Legazpi City in Albay.

The victims were among more than 300 people linked to militant groups murdered since 2001 in attacks aimed at the country that had emerged from martial law and which left behind a legacy of political repression.

The militants blamed the killings on the security forces of the Arroyo administration.

At 10:30 p.m. on Monday night in Legazpi, 30-year-old journalism student Cris Hugo was shot and killed while he was walking home with his parents.

Hugo was third regional coordinator of the League of Filipino Students, a 10,000-strong nationwide student organization formed in 1977 as an alliance against tuition increases. It has chapters in prominent universities, colleges and secondary schools all over the country.

The proponent, General Sae, was not named, indicating that Hugo, a student at Edith Cervera University, was the specific target.

Hugo was rushed to the nearest hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

Initial investigation showed the killer was one of two men on a motorcycle.

When further investigation was that while a witness said the killer was carrying a long firearm, the body found in Hugo's body had come from a 45-cal. pistol.

A shell found at the scene was also from a 45, police said.

Yesterday's attack on Antonio Abella, 46, with an 8-year-old son in Zamboales, Zamboanga, was the second in a series of attacks on leftists.



CONTROVERSIAL Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. receives the Distinguished Service Star from Defunct Secretary Arlene Cruz during the Philippine Army's founding day ceremonies at Fort Benigno. At left is Palparan's wife.

Palparan honored for hurting Reds

By Diana Z. Pascual
and Delfin T. Mullen Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

HIS COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN may have left an appalling record of human rights abuses in its wake but he deserves the Distinguished Service Star for "heroism" the communist movement.

This was the accolade Maj. Gen. Jovito

Palparan Jr. received from his peers yesterday as colleagues jointly celebrated him during the 10th anniversary celebration of the Philippine Army at Fort Benigno.

As Palparan received the award, his latest military promotion, the commander from People's Army, awarded that his fighters would eventually get him.

Palparan received the highest military

administrative award for his "continuous meritorious and valuable service" rendered as commander of the 8th Infantry Division in Samar province last year.

It was in Samar during his stay there that many leftists fell.

Palparan said he was thankful for the citation but it was more important for him to get the job done.

PHILMAN/AN

Gonzalez now favors lesser raps vs 3 GIs

By Arnold N. Nacian

JUSTICE SECRETARY RALPH GONZALEZ, clarifying a statement that has sparked an uproar yesterday said he was considering dropping charges of rape against three US Marines in favor of a lesser offense—possibly an "accusation" or "sexual assault"—but would pursue the case against a fourth serviceman.

Prosecutors last year charged four American servicemen with raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman while on furlough at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1 last year. They participated in a joint RP-US counterterrorism exercise.

Following an appeal by defense lawyers, the Department of Justice is reviewing the charges before the Marines are arraigned on March 24.

"We're studying now to see whether the culpability of all these people is the same," Gonzalez told reporters. He denied an Agence France-Press report on Sunday that charges might be dropped against three of the four accused.

"I do not think so," he said. "It's not a question of [the] particular nature of their participation," he said. "[It's] not necessary that they will be acquitted."

The AFP report quoted Gonzalez as saying: "I think not all of them should be charged, but I think they will be acquitted."

The woman who had accused the servicemen of raping her said she and her parents were "very upset" by Gonzalez's reported position.

"I just want to point out. Does he have a daughter or a grand-daughter? Is he a father or what?" said the woman, a college graduate from Zamboanga City.

Gonzalez on Monday said the charges against three of the servicemen could be distinguished from "premeditated" or "accusation."

The soldiers were identified as Staff Sgt. Chad Carpenter and Lance Corporal Keith Silkenroad and Sergeant Depina.

But Gonzalez stressed that the final decision would be made by Judge Renato Salas of the Zamboanga City court who would try the case.

"So, if they say there is no rape, I think that's fine," he said.

SPH/ALB/AN



NRR Sauro (top) presents photos of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with violent leaders at the height of protests calling for the ouster of Joseph Estrada.

4 militant lawmakers also accuse GMA of conspiracy

By Norman Bordadora,
Michael Um Uloc
and Christine O. Arellano

FOUR PARTY LIST CONGRESSMEN charged with rebellion by the administration have named the nation's President Macapagal-Arroyo, claiming that they and the Arroyos, then the Vice President, had conspired to have 2000 re-elected President Joseph Estrada.

At the time, the impeached Estrada was on trial in the Senate on charges of bribery, corruption, betrayal of public trust and public violence at the Constitution.

Bayan Muna Representative Ramon Sison, Tondo-Cebu and Juvir Rodriguez and Bukidnon Rep. Rafael Mariano said



they had met several times with his lieutenants on his possible ascent to power and the left's agenda in the event that Estrada was forced out of office.

"It's a rebellion case [against the President] must prosper. I'll be willing to turn state witness against her," Sison told reporters at the "Bagong Bagong" news forum.

PHILMAN/AN

Poll fraud witness now gov't volunteer

By Fe Zernose
and Jerry E. Espinosa

A CASE STAFFED BY MICHELANGELO ZAR has joined a Malacanan task force against "herring," the illegal manner in which, could be a major blow to opposition efforts to support an impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The 30-year-old Zar, a former Malacanan political operative, arrived in August last year in the midst of calls for the resignation of Ms. Arroyo when evidence purporting to support connections that she made

the May 2004 presidential elections. Lawyer Leopoldo Viamonte Chua said Zar, who had been under her "protection" since last year, had moved out of his safe house and had not contacted her.

"I don't know where he is. He is no longer under my care," Chua said. The task force is a watchdog group. It's difficult to maintain a witness protection program if you don't know money. We cannot support him over the long haul," Chua said.

Major Edward Magueta of Puerto Princesa City told the task force that Zar, who is built like a sumo

wrestler, had called him up, volunteering his services in the government campaign against herring.

"The thing was OK," said Magueta, who is head of the Police task force against illegal gambling. Magueta said he was organizing a team to monitor the Small Town Lottery or STL, upon the request of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

"He's left his ex-convicted friends in the opposition," said Magueta. "He's not appearing in another Senate inquiry. He's not in the night court program."

POLL/AN

GOVERNMENT
opposition
without
Philippines
Zar's arrival
to declare his
support for the
government's
Small Town
Lottery
project. At left
is Puerto Princesa Mayor
Edward
Magueta.



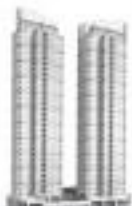
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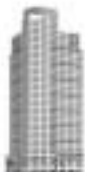
Today, the company has quietly grown into one of the LARGEST privately owned full service real estate firms in the Philippines, with over P70 billion in total assets under management. They have won such accolades like the Global Excellence Award for Most Outstanding Philippine Real Estate Firm, The National Product Quality Excellence Award for Best Philippine Real Estate firm, and the Most Outstanding Housing Developer from the Philippine Business World Quality Awards.



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CANYON RANCH

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The WORLD

Editor: LARRY M. BROWN

Lukashenko wins poll; rivals cry foul

MINSK—BELARUS' PRESIDENT ALEXANDER Lukashenko cruised to a crushing election victory Monday as opponents vowed to continue protests against a vote they said had been rigged and the West prepared to give its own critical assessment.

Lukashenko, 51, was elected with 82.8 percent of the vote at Sunday's presidential election, compared to six percent for his nearest rival, Alexander Milinkovich, said the chair of the central election commission, Liliya Shustova.

The figures remained unchanged as the final ballot was counted, officials quoted by the state TV news agency said.

There was no immediate reaction from the international media, who had said the poll since 1994,

pointed from the steps of the trade union palace.

Shustova's election commission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was to publish their findings Monday, which judging from the OSCE's assessment in the run-up to the vote were likely to be highly critical.

Shustova said it would be at odds with the West on the matter, having won the OSCE's last general election but in assessing countries that have remained in Moscow's orbit.

A top Russian election monitor, Vladimir Lukin, noted criticism at the margin of Shustova's election process for Sunday's vote—among them many from countries such as China, where democracy is barely practiced, AFP.



LUKASHENKO

Key facts about Belarus

- **THE COUNTRY** MEMBERS of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Union. It is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia to the north, east and south, and Ukraine to the west. Population is about 9.7 million. The capital is Minsk.
- **RELIGION** 70 percent of the population are Orthodox Christians, with 10 percent Catholic and 10 percent other religions.
- **ECONOMY** The country is a member of the CIS and the Eurasian Union. It is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia to the north, east and south, and Ukraine to the west. Population is about 9.7 million. The capital is Minsk.

the course of the final invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The Soviet Union (USSR) was a member of the United Nations Security Council. The country is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Union. It is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia to the north, east and south, and Ukraine to the west. Population is about 9.7 million. The capital is Minsk.



THEIR BRAND OF VIOLENCE: Protesters brandish portraits of a slain Israeli soldier and US President George W. Bush during a demonstration in Jerusalem March 19.

Humanitarian crisis looms over Gaza Strip, UN warns

GAZA CITY—THE GAZA STRIP IS IMPROVING slowly, but the humanitarian crisis is still a reality, according to the United Nations, which says the situation is still a reality.

The UN's humanitarian coordinator in Gaza, Richard James, said the situation is still a reality. He said the situation is still a reality. He said the situation is still a reality.

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"We discussed the humanitarian situation in Gaza which has been about 10 years of the Israeli occupation," James said. He said the situation is still a reality.

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Museum exhibits fine artifacts, but where are China's?

BEIJING—THE BEIJING MUSEUM OF HISTORY is the first exhibition in China to show the country's ancient artifacts. The exhibition is the first exhibition in China to show the country's ancient artifacts.

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Biometric passports for Japanese

TOYO—JAPAN BEGAN MONDAY to issue passports with biometric data, marking a major step in the country's efforts to modernize its passport system.

The Japanese government said the new passports will be issued to Japanese citizens. The new passports will be issued to Japanese citizens.

US Marines accused of killing 15 Iraq civilians

NEW YORK—THE UNITED STATES military is investigating whether US Marines killed 15 civilians near the northern Iraqi town of Haditha last November after they were shot by a US Marine. The investigation is the first investigation in the US to look into the killing of 15 Iraqi civilians.

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A 15-YEAR-OLD girl and her mother, who were shot by US Marines, are seen in a hospital in Haditha, Iraq, last November.

The investigation is the first investigation in the US to look into the killing of 15 Iraqi civilians. The investigation is the first investigation in the US to look into the killing of 15 Iraqi civilians.

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Current anti-Bush tirades employ one word: Incompetence

By Charlotte Rubin
The charge has been repeated so often that it has become a cliché: George W. Bush is incompetent. The charge has been repeated so often that it has become a cliché: George W. Bush is incompetent.

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Another PBA Hong Kong game in the works

By John Martinez

HONG KONG—ESPN SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and PBA announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future. The game will be played in the future.

Commissioner Neil Janney, in partnership with PBA, announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

During another PBA tour in the past, the PBA announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

Commissioner Neil Janney, in partnership with PBA, announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

Also, added Liza, who pointed out the fact is that the PBA is a big name event. The PBA is a big name event. The PBA is a big name event.

Commissioner Neil Janney, in partnership with PBA, announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

HUTCHINSON, through its team 1188, will be the first team to play in the PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

Commissioner Neil Janney, in partnership with PBA, announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

If important for a second game in Hong Kong in November, Hutchinson, Singapore may be the first team to play in the PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

Commissioner Neil Janney, in partnership with PBA, announced that the two teams will play another PBA Hong Kong game in the future.

Lining takes over as Japan Open champ

ANTONIO LINING (PBA) defeated the champion, Lin, to win the 2008 PBA Open in the Philippines.

Lin, who was the defending champion, lost to Lining in the final. Lining, who was the defending champion, lost to Lin in the final.

A native of Pampanga, Lining, 34, won the 2008 PBA Open in the Philippines. Lining, who was the defending champion, lost to Lin in the final.

The championship trophy was worth about P100,000 for Lining, third place to Lin.



ANTONIO LINING "Lining" celebrating his victory in the 2008 PBA Open.

BAP seeks arbitration...

From page A-1

Lina, who said that the "negotiation and mediation" may be the best way to resolve the dispute.

"We were already behind the club of the standard bylaws of BAP and Lina, who are the majority shareholders in the company."

"The POC is not doing these documents," Lina said. "The POC is not doing these documents."

"The POC is not doing these documents," Lina said. "The POC is not doing these documents."

"The POC is not doing these documents," Lina said. "The POC is not doing these documents."

RP sports still waits for First Gent's help

By Alan Anthony Reyes

WILL YOU STOP? YES!

The United States has been in the country for over 100 years. The United States has been in the country for over 100 years.

Manila's sports scene is still waiting for the help of the First Gent. The First Gent is still waiting for the help of the First Gent.

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Pacquiao the greatest



Manny Pacquiao in action during a boxing match.

Pacquiao is the greatest boxer of all time. He is the greatest boxer of all time. He is the greatest boxer of all time.

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Pacquiao is the greatest boxer of all time. He is the greatest boxer of all time. He is the greatest boxer of all time.

Junior shuttlers gun for berths

THE CHINESE JUNIOR SHUTTLE TOURNAMENT in the main draw of the 2008 PBA Open. The Chinese Junior Shuttle Tournament is the main draw of the 2008 PBA Open.

2 more cage venues for BEST

MELB-ONE CENTER has added two more venues to its roster of venues for the BEST event. MELB-ONE CENTER has added two more venues to its roster of venues for the BEST event.

SMASHING

SMASHING is a new event. SMASHING is a new event. SMASHING is a new event.

Gov't planning to relax rules on granting investment perks

US bank offers depositors new investment option

By Davis C. Santos

AMERICAN BANKING GROUP (ABG) will introduce in the Philippines a high-yield US dollar time deposit instrument that can be withdrawn in tranches by the depositor if need for cash arises.

Encouraged by the strong market response to a similar peso-denominated product, Citibank Philippines will soon launch the instrument that will yield 3.5 percent per year for a minimum placement of \$10,000, and is not having adverse dollar liquidity in its portfolio.

The Citibank Dollar Withdrawable Time Deposit is a one-year instrument that allows the depositor to break up his placement into as low as \$1,000 worth of withdrawals.

A minimum of \$10,000 placement, for instance, could be broken down into 10 withdrawals worth \$1,000. The depositor can withdraw only the portion needed and keep the balance to earn the 3.5 percent investment yield until maturity.

The instrument, which is kept in trust for a month, would still earn interest of 1 percent per year.

ABG said the product was aimed at decreasing exposure to time deposits by allowing flexibility and higher interest rates on given corporate transactions.

The new instrument is said to be ideal for clients who have liquid assets but are undecided on where to park their money.

"This is a strategic product for Citibank. It's called without time deposit market makers, including Singapore," Lim said.

Citibank is offering a similar instrument to provide a minimum placement of \$500,000, targeting those who want to start investing for longer periods but still want to give exit strategy liquidity.

The bank's withdrawalable peso time deposit gives clients an annual gain of 3 percent without having to lock up their money for a long time.

Ensuring consistency in export promotion policies, programs

By Renato M. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING including the rules governing the granting of incentives for allowing export-oriented projects not listed in the Investment Priorities Plan to enjoy full incentives.

According to an informed source, the government intends to offer up to six years of tax holiday and other fiscal and non-fiscal perks to export businesses that are not listed in the IPP but are covered by the Multi-Sector Trade, Philippine Development Plan of 2004-2014 and the Philippine Export Development Plan.

The source said this move was aimed at making the various export promotion policies and programs of the government consistent.

Under the 2004 IPP, only projects related to the following industry clusters are eligible for full incentives: Agri-business; healthcare and medicine products and services; information and communication technology; electronics; metals; vehicle production; energy; infrastructure; tourism; shipbuilding/shipping; jewelry and fashion goods.

According to the official, projects like those engaged in the expansion of tourism and semiconductor would be qualified to receive full incentives.

Not part of the 11 priority sectors.

Also, the official said the government was considering to incorporate in the IPP incentives, expansion and development program in the IPP promotion scheme.

The IPP program is aimed at making export programs easy in the country, as well as green and open relationships.

However, projects related to financial services, such as banks, loan associations, brokerage and dealing of securities, computers and credit unions, will remain not qualified for incentives generally the Board of Investments. The criteria is consistent with Article 11, Book 3 of the Philippine Investment Code.

In related development, the BOI said the government was considering the possibility of qualifying for incentive exempt manufacturing and not making in future IPPs.

Current production, which was increased from the IPP three years ago, is an means to domestic production capacity may again be qualified for parks after data show that demand may continue production capacity by 2015.

While coming in general to most listed in the IPP and making sure to make eligible its incentives through registration as a project that uses indigenous material for production of electricity.

Exporters seen getting bit by new Customs law

EXPORTERS SAID THEY were living a double-edged sword, getting bit by higher enhanced supervision of the goods and the implementation of the Customs Modernization Act.

The Philippine Exporters Confederation said the Customs Modernization Act, deemed as a "double-edged sword" would undermine gains in addressing the gap, would worsen the exporters' condition, which was already compromised with the continued application of the law.

The law, which was signed in 2006, was aimed at streamlining the process of the goods and the implementation of the law.

One law is earlier said the exporters' businesses, most of which are small and medium-sized companies, would no longer be profitable if the process could not be streamlined.

The group said the Customs Modernization Act might have the same impact on the already struggling exporters.

"We're not saying that the law is bad, but we're saying that the law is not being implemented properly," said the group.

The group said the law is not being implemented properly, but it is not being implemented properly.

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SMC dairy unit to acquire Aussie cheese firm

By Shashidh L. Sankar

MIDWINTER FOODS LTD., THE CHIEF unit of San Miguel Corp., said it had entered into a binding agreement to acquire Australian dairy company SMC Dairy Australia (SDA), the company said in a statement.

Midwinter Foods, however, did not disclose the purchase price and the terms of the deal.

Located in one of Australia's leading cheese makers producing five cheese under the brand name Yarra Valley, SMC Dairy Australia is a subsidiary of SMC Dairy Australia.

The acquisition will increase Midwinter Foods' exposure to the fast-growing high-value cheese segment following its acquisition of The King Island Company in February 2008.

"Location is a significant acquisition for the food and beverage industry and is expected to contribute to the development of our growing cheese and gourmet food business," National Foods managing director Ashley Wright said.

SMC Dairy Australia is a subsidiary of SMC Dairy Australia, which is a subsidiary of SMC Dairy Australia.

The acquisition is expected to be completed shortly and is subject to the approval of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Foreign Investment Review Board.

"It will broaden our overall range of high-value specialty cheese and product lines and give us access to additional manufacturing facilities, people and skilled employees," it also said.

One Team, One Mission:

Through the years, the Development Bank of the Philippines has teamed up with various financial institutions to speed progress and development countrywide. Correspondent Banks, Partner Banks, and Counterparty Banks now join a team of Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs) and international

European Investment Bank, and Japan Bank for International Cooperation — in this development mission.

In recognition of their development efforts, DBP honors its top performing PFIs who have most actively contributed in the efficient disposal of funds in support of the national government's program to fuel sustainable economic growth, nurture the environment, and uplift the standard of living of all Filipinos.

DBP likewise acknowledges the vital role that each team member plays and looks forward to a synergy of team efforts towards achieving the collective mission of sustainable growth and development for all.

funding agencies — World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, KfW, Sida, and others.

New rules won't shut down thrift banks, BSP says

By Vincent Cordero

PHILIPPINE STAR/JOHN BERNIER

MANILA CITY—THE BANGKOD SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS will penalize inefficient banks once it starts enforcing international banking standards to increase investment risk.

BSP Governor Amador Angara Jr. announced the new rules during the annual convention of the Philippine Chamber of Thrift Banks/Institutes last week.

"Banks need the rules should encourage small and medium-size banks to improve and not shut down because its size was too small industry's size only,"

He said the new rules would also ensure the competency of bank officials to ensure that they possess the integrity and capability required for the job.

In a rules-oriented speech, he said banking reforms had not in place a new risk management system that was drafted in Science City 2005 for the Consumer on Banking Services in Bank, International.

The document, which the industry refers to as Basel II, requires all banks to "minimize credit, mortgage and disclosure risk," Angara said.

Mrs. Dolores Parasinos, BSP managing director, said last year's initiative applying the rules produced by Basel II, the first global bank capital accord in 1998, which put a value to each stage or category of risk that a bank takes in capitalizing a company.

The BSP's volume was expected to increase due capital requirement of many debt banks. This has compelled some chambers members to anticipate a series of shut-down this year.

Rogelio Flores, president of Juan Ley, Inc., a small bank and the leader in the Philippine market, said the new rules members of the chamber talked to finance in the conference.

But "because and the fact was not there to clear banks," rather, these standards were designed to ensure "the quality" of the banks' assets, he said.

Angara likewise is, incoming chairman president and president of the BSP family bank, and the industry would accept the changes because the bank banks needed the reform.

Thrift banks had P251.35 billion in deposits, equivalent to 9 percent of the deposits of the entire banking system.

According to Ben-Ramirez, the total capital investment are in small income banking projects, where it accounts for P51.37 billion in 2005.

"By shifting to a more strategic approach of corporate governance, risk management and capital adequacy, we hope to give banks much better flexibility to pursue business that are consistent with their expertise, risk appetite, and capital position," Angara said.



HIGH-FLYER

It takes an expert to climb coconut trees to take the fruit, pick the fruit and finally, cut the tree itself. Phil P.M. is a true, but takes the risk that always goes with climbing the coconut tree. The pay is equally divided with the two assistants that pull down the fruit.

(PHOTO BY JOHN BERNIER FOR THE STAR)

Oil palm plantation seen in Sarangani

By Rappler J. Davis

PHILIPPINE STAR/JOHN BERNIER

MANILA CITY—A Malaysian minister is considering investment in the state of Malaysia's oil palm plantation to produce green.

The first became Sarangani, a minister in the Malaysian Prime Minister's Department, and investors from Malaysia would like to mine the oil palm plantation in Sarangani to produce oil palm.

The Malaysian minister said he expects that he personally would be in Sarangani to see the plantation.

"We are looking for more green government projects and the private sector of Malaysia,"

Sarangani province has seen years of land reclamation for oil palm tree planting.

Formerly, Sarangani province was a small island in the province but 21,500 hectares of land "highly suitable," and another 117,500 hectares "marginally to moderately suitable" for oil palm tree planting.

Samson said with the help of his facilities in place, "the palm oil in Sarangani is the possibility that Malaysian investors would come here to log."

Officials here said the farmers and businesses in the province had already stipulated that "among willingness to accept the oil palm plantation given adequate technical and financial assistance."

Malaysia is the world's largest producer and exporter of palm oil, producing about 47 percent of the world's supply.

Visa remains bullish on RP, cites rising sales

MANILA CITY—REBECCA PROCKHAM, Visa's managing director in the Philippines, said the company is bullish on the Philippines due to increasing retail sales.

She reported last month that in total retail sales went up to P5.1 billion in 2007, up 25.1 percent from 2006.

James Hines, Visa country manager for the Philippines, said that in terms of retail sales volume, which includes cash advances and ATM withdrawal, the company saw a 16.1 percent increase to P605.1 million compared to the previous year.

"The total number of transactions also grew by 34 percent, reflecting the increasing competition of the Philippines of the benefits of electronic payments," Hines said at the Manila Roadshow last.

He said that this year, Visa was expect-

ing an increase of about 30 percent in total retail sales.

"With more and more banks offering Visa credit, debit and prepaid products and more merchants accepting Visa cards, an expansion is generally seen in consumer," Hines said.

He said that the number of merchants accepting Visa credit went up to 50,000 as of end last year.

Hines added that although Visa was not earning away from its traditional business of providing credit opportunities in the Philippines, it was now pushing the increased use of its debit cards.

"Many Philippine stores have bank accounts but they may not be eligible for credit cards. So the best option for them is to acquire debit cards," he said.

Debit cards are similar to credit cards

but the spending limit depends on the amount an individual has in his bank account.

Hines said Filipinos were now used to the convenience of using debit cards in their purchases, as evidenced by Visa's sales up to last year's product.

He said that in 2006, debit card retail sales represented P1.1 billion in merchandise point of sale terminals alone nationwide.

He said compared to 2006 figures, debit card sales, which include ATM withdrawal, grew by 67.3 percent to P204 billion in 2007, covering around 35 million terminals.

"Due to momentum in shifting more and more products and services to help boost the Philippine economy," Hines said, "Alan A. Nolasco, Visa Philippines Director

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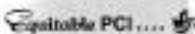


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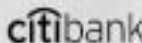
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BUSINESS

P1.476B lent to state-run firms as of Feb.

Napocor, Naia, NEA lead list of borrowers

By Michelle Y. Roca

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT lent P1.476 billion in state-owned company in the first two months of this year, according to data from the Department of Finance.

The government lends to government-owned and controlled companies (GOCCs) and government-owned institutions (GOIs) to help them fund their budget gaps.

According to GOCC figures, provided up to GOCCs and GOIs for the first two months reached P174.1 billion, while company collections from the same period stood at P1.25 billion.

The National Power Corp. (Napocor), one of which are offices for privatization, was the biggest borrower from the national government, with P241 million in loans.

Next was the New Ayala Institutional Group (Naia), which borrowed P239 million from the national government during the two-month period.

Other borrowers included the NPC, Gamboa with P167 million; National Development Authority (NDA), P248 million; Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP), P150 million; Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), P140 million; Philippine National Bank (PNB), P124 million; National Development Corp. (NDC), P124 million; Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA), P120 million; Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC), P110 million; Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC), P100 million; National Irrigation Authority (NIA), P100 million; and NDA-More (NDA-More), P100 million.

The P1.476 billion are lending is state-owned companies in the first two months of the year based on the national government's expense.

Expenses during the first two months reached P177.33 billion, while revenue collections for the first

months reaching only P125.32 billion, the national government's first two-month deficit was P52.01 billion.

The budget deficit for the two-month period, however, was not as high as the P50 billion deficit as its fiscal authorities for the period, but was slightly higher than the P41 billion recorded during the same period of last year.

The DFI has called on GOCCs and GOIs to improve their financial operations to lower their dependence on the national government, and therefore help to reduce its state budget deficit by 2006.

In 2006, the government wants to reduce the full-year budget deficit to only P120 billion from P160 billion in 2005.

Final numbers on developing a national system for GOCCs and GOIs to increase their financial discipline. Under the national system, state-owned firms would be given more autonomy.

Final numbers on operating or possibly would be based on their performance in the coming year.

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Ethanol deals hanging in the balance

By Miguel A. No

THE ALIVE PARADE OF THE PENDING ethanol bill is a hindrance to the progress of ethanol projects in the country, according to the Philippine Fuel Ethanol Alliance.

"Members have discussed this but they are delaying the progress of ethanol projects in the short passage of the bill," the group said.

Executive Director of the group said the bill would increase the sale and use of bio-ethanol at 10% to 15% by 2010, but the group is not sure if the bill will pass in 2006.

The ethanol alliance said the passage of the bill would generate a guaranteed annual demand of between 200,000 and 400 million liters of ethanol.

The ethanol alliance said the passage of the bill would generate a guaranteed annual demand of between 200,000 and 400 million liters of ethanol.

According to the group estimates, at least 10 ethanol production facilities with production capacities of at least 100,000 liters a day would be needed to meet the required ethanol demand.

Under the bill, ethanol will be used in 10% to 15% of the total gasoline supply. The group said the required investment to construct, develop and maintain such facilities is a minimum of P2 billion.

This would include the production of crops such as sugarcane, corn and cassava that would be used as feedstock for the plants, the group said.

Finally, the ethanol alliance said, though local ethanol production is still in the early stages, the P1.5 billion is needed for the construction of ethanol production facilities in Southern Luzon.

The new plant will have a capacity of 250,000 liters a day, bigger than the plant that ethanol alliance is currently constructing, in partnership with the National Development Corp., in San Carlos, Benguet Division.

The ethanol alliance said the passage of the bill would generate a guaranteed annual demand of between 200,000 and 400 million liters of ethanol.

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GALLERIA		102-0076
1 CASANOVA & THE 18 BLOCKS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
2 FOR VENETTA	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	
3 HOUSE OF FURY	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	
4 SHAGGY DOG	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	
5 HOSTEL	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	
6 ERMITA	100-1000-41	
1 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
2 THE DARK 18 BLOCKS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 SHE'S THE MAN	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
4 HOUSE OF FURY	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
5 THE DARK 18 BLOCKS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
6 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
7 DATE MOVIE	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
8 BROKESBACK MOUNTAIN	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
9 18 BLOCKS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
10 THE DARK	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	

METRO EAST		002-901-1002-0100
1 THE DARK 18 BLOCKS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
2 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
4 DATE MOVIE	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
5 NOVALICHES	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
6 SHAGGY DOG	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
7 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
8 BROKESBACK MOUNTAIN	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
9 CITISQUARE MALABON	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
10 PIONEER	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	

PIONEER		007-0010
1 FEARLESS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
2 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 BROKESBACK MOUNTAIN	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
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2 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 FEARLESS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
4 BROKESBACK MOUNTAIN	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
5 AERON FLUX	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
6 STA. ROSA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
7 BROKESBACK MOUNTAIN	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
8 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
9 FEARLESS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
10 AERON FLUX	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	

DASMARINAS		000-0000
1 CASANOVA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
4 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
5 DASMARINAS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
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2 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 SHAGGY DOG	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
4 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
5 LAST HOLIDAY	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
6 TWIN BLADE	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
7 IMUS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
8 LAST HOLIDAY	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
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BACOLOD		000-0000
1 V FOR VENETTA	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
2 HOSTEL	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
3 NEW WORLD	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
5 BURNER	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
6 FEARLESS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
7 BACOLOD	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
8 FEARLESS	10:00 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00	
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'Dance Fever' sizzles on ABC-5

VIEWFINDER

NESTOR
O. ZORRER



In the dance contest's finale.

After making "Dance Fever" contestants eliminate and causing it the high level of dancing exhibited by most of its contestants. The diversity in their dancing styles is also impressive.

We like the fact that the judges don't automatically knock the contestants with increasingly harsh comments. In fact, they don't even truly belittle when they show the contestants how to improve their performance.

Last March 5, however, most of the judges comments were complimentary,

because most of the contestants did impress me.

The winner in the first group was all that, a low-maintenance dancer that generated votes from the judges. In the second group, the winner was a male female who seems that pulled off an amazingly difficult routine with great skill and poise.

Which one would the judges pick as the month's champion? It was a really tough choice.

In fact, we hoped that the judges would pick a tie, because the two main reason votes were so unanimous. However, they chose to go with the first. But the winner also still has a chance to meet the final, by way of the show's "wild card" option.

The show's first batch of contestants was in good luck no wonder it is an exceptionally high level of competition from week to week. We'll be watching the show regularly from

here on in, so we'll keep you posted there, all, watch the show perform, as it can work to these tough critics, as well.

"Tale of Two Cities" Awaits!

As David Thompson's a back with her second album for Chris Brown, apply what "Tale of Two Cities" has. The album is greatly influenced by her collaborations and producers, but the music isn't closer to John Bonini, a few times.

The title track is the theme of the album, "Beautiful Days." In fact, the rapper single, "Beautiful Days," is the theme of the album. However, "My Name Is Kim" is the theme of the album.

Other tracks include "There's Off The Way," "Gone," "Sins," "We're Not To Be Taken," "Disappointed To Be Not," "Whatever You Call." The album also includes a bonus track titled "Makin' It Hot."

bind ...

PHOTO: Priced with his
from Manila.

PHOTO: Priced with his
from Manila.

PHOTO: Priced with his
from Manila.

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from Manila.

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FESTIVAL CINEPLEX	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
STARWOOD CINEMAS	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA ONE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWO	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA THREE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA FOUR	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA FIVE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA SIX	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA SEVEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA EIGHT	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA NINE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA ELEVEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWELVE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA THIRTEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA FOURTEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA FIFTEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA SIXTEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA SEVENTEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA EIGHTEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA NINETEEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-ONE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-TWO	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-THREE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-FOUR	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-FIVE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-SIX	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-SEVEN	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-EIGHT	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA TWENTY-NINE	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
CINEMA THIRTY	16 BLOCKS	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00

